

Remarks at SUSI Alumni Reunion
Serena Hotel, Sheesh Mahal Hall
Friday, January 18, 1500

Hello and welcome to ...

- Dr. Michael Hannahan, University of Massachusetts-Amherst.
- All of our SUSI (*sus-ee*) alumni from all over the country.

AssalamuAlaikum.

Thank you to the alumni volunteers on the planning committee who helped to organize this first ever SUSI alumni reunion.

We are proud of the Study of the U.S. Institutes programs. These institutes allow talented Pakistani students to spend six weeks of intense study in the United States. As young ambassadors, you represent the best of Pakistan to your American and international classmates.

The United States and Pakistan are working together to create a brighter future for the people of Pakistan. Unlocking every person's full potential with a quality education is one of our top assistance priorities. This is because education is the key to future prosperity and economic growth. Education will give Pakistanis the opportunity to improve their skills, compete in the global marketplace, and build a stronger country.

The United States and Pakistan are carrying out comprehensive education programs that help millions of Pakistan's children and young people rise as far as their hard work and initiative will take them.

Our goal is to help 3.2 million children read at or above their grade level. We are working with Pakistan to create accredited degree programs in teaching that currently enroll more than 2,600 future teachers. We are building or rehabilitating nearly 800 schools, benefiting 62,000 school children, particularly girls.

We are also increasing access to higher education. More than 10,600 low-income students have attended college here in Pakistan as a result of U.S.-funded scholarships. Together with the Government of Pakistan, we are establishing Centers for Advanced Studies at three Pakistani universities. These universities will partner with American universities and focus on applied research in agriculture, energy, and water. These kinds of partnerships will pay lasting dividends to Pakistan in the future.

We are also proud of our exchange programs. Each year, we send over 1,000 Pakistanis to the United States on a variety of academic and professional exchange programs, including the SUSI (*sus-ee*) program. Teenage students study for one year in our high schools. Undergraduate students study at universities from six weeks to one year. Graduate students do research in energy and water conservation, education and health policy, and business management. And mid-career professionals meet their American counterparts on shorter-term programs.

When I look into this audience, I see many impressive young people. Each of you represents this nation's bright future. I'm proud that my country has had a role in your education and helped your country, one student at a time.

Now that you've returned to Pakistan, I hope that you are using your experience to better your own communities. We want to support your efforts through our alumni network. We have eleven alumni chapters throughout the country, and through these networks, we organize social activities, networking opportunities, community service projects, and professional development workshops. Let us know what kinds of activities you'd like to see, and we'll work with you to make it happen.

Our Public Affairs office also has an alumni small grants program, and I encourage you to consider applying. For the next five years, Public Affairs will award 50 small grants each year to our alumni. These grants will allow you to improve your communities and further the great work many of you are already doing.

We often times hear often of the difficulties in the relationship between the United States and Pakistan. When I look around at you, I see how much we have in common: love of education, service to our communities, friendship. It is these common threads that will help us build a better relationship between our two countries and our two peoples.

In closing, I have a message to all the young alumni in the audience. Your country needs you to make it a better place. Continue with your studies and the important community service work you are doing. Devote your time and energy to making Pakistan the country you want it to be. While the challenges you face will be large, we will continue to support you as you do even greater things in the future. I look forward to learning about your successes.